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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Portugese West Africa

SUBJECT Operation of the Benguela Railway

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Benguela Railway. This line is government owned and runs from Lobito, its weatern terminus on the Atlantic to Luau, on the Belgian Congo border, a distance of 1,348 kilometers. From Luau the railway traverses the Congo to Dilimetethmille and then goes south to the Union of South Africa. The hala Railway is single track for most of its mileage in Angola with resing spurs located at infrequent intervals. It is one meter (1.067) stage and uses, for the most part, 60 pound rails.

- 2. All locomotives in use on the Benguela Railway are wood-burning. For the large in heavier trains mallet type locomotives are used. Passenger coaches, European-type goods cars and 30 ton one cars comprise the rolling stock. European couplings (chain links) and European-type air brakes (positive pressure) are utilized throughout the system. Rails are never beveled where they are joined of this results in a very rough ride. Road beds are banked but would not be capable of high speed traffic. Maintenance of the road beds is about fair.
- The Lobito-Luau sector of this railway has a considerable amount of traffic. The Lobito harbor is usually very busy and most of the cargo hauled consists of ore from the upper Congo mines and almost all of the cobalt produced in the Belgian Congo is transported by this route. Almost all of the mines in the upper Congo also receive most of their supplies via the Benguela Railway.
- The efficiency of the Benguela Railway is about 10% that of a comparable US line. For example, the Benguela Railway freight trains haul a maximum

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load of 350 tons in a train of 10 ore cars at about one-third the speed of a US line. There are frequent wood loading stops of about 10 minutes duration which occur about every two hours. In addition many delays are caused by derailments and some delays are occasionally caused by collisions. Because of the railway being the tropics, and consequently affected by heavy rain storms, there should be a number of wash-outs although I have never heard of any occurring.

- passenger trains. Most of these trains are jammed with African passengers although very few Europeans are carried. On the trains I have traveled only about 10% of the available white space was ever occupied. The best passenger train and one of the fastest is the boat train which operates on a bi-weekly schedule from Elizabethville in the Belgian Congo to Lobito and return. It requires at least 72, and sometimes more, hours to travel from Lobito to Luau. In addition to the boat train the "Rapide" is a fast train for passenger and express service and operates on a semi-weekly schedule. The "semi-Rapide," which operates also on a twice a week schedule, carries passengers and freight. There are also semi-weekly trains which carry mixed freight and passengers. All of these trains traverse the entire route of the Benguela Railway although not all of the cars go the entire distance to the Congo border.
- I know nothing of any specific security measures in connection with the Benguela Railway and I have never seen any particular security safeguards along its route. In most of the stations native police (sapais) are posted but they are not considered as railroad police. In the harbor area at Lobito one cannot get in or out without a pass. One of the most effective safeguards in Angola is the strict control over foreigners exercised by the government. It is difficult to secure a visa to enter Angola and, once in Angola, every movement of strangers is strictly controlled by police. A foreigner cannot go any place, even for an overnight stay, without first securing police permission in the form of a guia (travel permit). I consider this control to be an effective security measure for the railroads since the movement of any stranger is known and it would be but a matter of a few hours before the local native police would know of his whereabouts. While the police depend entirely upon their native informants they are nevertheless kept well informed. The Angolan natives are very observant and are great talkers; they quickly notice the presence of any stranger. Information of any unusual activity or of the presence of any stranger is quickly relayed to the police.
- 7. The Luanda Railway operates from that city to Malange. This railway is 648 kilometers in length with 617 kilometers being of one meter guage construction and 31 kilometers in narrow guage (60 centimeters). The Luanda Railway operates at about the same efficiency and the same standards as the Benguela Railway. In addition to its wood-burning locomotives the Luanda Railway utilizes a diesel passenger coach which travels on a semi-weekly schedule between Luanda and Malange at a fairly good rate of speed up to 50 miles per hour.

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